

Minutes of Town of Amherst Public Works Committee
meeting of Tuesday, January 11, 2005
Town Room, Town Hall, 7:00pm

present: Steven Puffer, Walter Wolnik (observer), Doug Lowing, Guilford Mooring, Michael Cann, Rob Crowner

1. Michael calls the meeting to order at 7:20pm. First agenda item, Community Development Block Grant, is tabled due to absence of committee member Vincent O'Connor.

2. Traffic issues discussion

3.

Guilford distributes a chart outlining areas in town that are under consideration for DPW work. It is the committee's responsibility to assist the Superintendent in prioritizing the list. The issues vary; some are traffic calming problems, while others are reconstruction/re-engineering proposals. As well, not all items carry the same sense of urgency; some have been on the table for a long time, while others are already proceeding toward resolution.

Guilford lead the group in reviewing the list. Items include:

- a. Amherst Woods (Larkspur Drive, Wildflower Drive/Old Farm Road, sidewalk); These issues have been extensively covered in previous meetings.
- b. Amity Street (various issues from North Pleasant Street to University Drive); Michael advocates for the Library crosswalk project. Walter believes the Library trustees envision a "pedestrian zone" similar to what exists on College Street next to Amherst College. Guilford notes that some people would like to introduce a "downtown zone" at Lincoln Avenue. Also, a bike lane has been requested to connect the downtown with University Drive.
- c. Atkins Corner (Hampshire College to Country Corners Road); this is a large project, for which the design phase is just beginning.
- d. Chestnut Street (Middle School);
- e. Fearing Street;
- f. Hitchcock/Orchard/Woodside Lanes;
These three areas are the subject of neighbors' complaints about speeding. In the case of Fearing Street, the perception is that traffic has slowed since the center line was not repainted.
- g. Mill Street/Pulpit Hill Road/Summer Street;
- h. Pine Street/East Pleasant Street/Sandhill Road intersection; These two areas are dangerous intersections requiring realignment or other solutions.
- i. Pomeroy Lane/West Street intersection; Some land taking may be necessary to accomplish all of the goals for this area.
- j. Rt. 63/Pine Street intersection; This is a long-lasting dilemma that features contrasting ideas about enhancing the Village Center aspect of the area by combining Sunderland and Montague Roads in some way to create a single intersection at Pine Street.
- k. South Amherst Common; This project is almost ready for a public hearing. \$19,000 has been spent on engineering and modeling; construction funding may be covered by Chapter 90.
- l. South Pleasant Street (Amherst College area); Amherst College will be presenting a summary report of it's College and South Pleasant Street projects to the Select Board next Tuesday (1/18). It will show that traffic has slowed on College as a result of raising the crosswalks there. However, South Pleasant traffic calming will likely have to be horizontal rather than vertical in nature, and may include rotaries or traffic lights. The effect could be felt all the way down to Snell Street, even if the measures used do not extend that far.
- m. Strong Street/East Pleasant Street intersection; DPW's preferred solution to a problem with cut-

through commuter traffic is alignment of Strong Street and UMass's Clark Hill Road, which would require cooperation from the University that has yet to be offered. Guilford notes that most traffic problems in Amherst exist only during the peak rush hour times, not throughout the day.

- n. University Drive. This could be an important project, but funding sources are not apparent at this juncture (a study identifying the problems is the only thing that has happened so far).

Guilford states that public hearings are already anticipated for the South Amherst Common (possibly in March), South Pleasant Street (several), and Atkins Corner (late spring). He recommends putting these in a "first priority" category, followed in second priority by University Drive and Pomeroy Lane/West Street, which will need funding sources in order to be advanced.

Guilford notes that if the Select Board agrees to add the Pomeroy Lane/West Street sidewalk extension to the town's Community Development Block Grant application, supporting information could easily be submitted by the March 1 deadline; the other aspects of that project would require more detailed engineering plans that could not be pulled together in time.

Guilford recommends listing the Amity Street area in third priority, with special consideration given to the Library crosswalk. All other items on the list would be assigned to fourth priority.

Doug suggests holding a public hearing on the University Drive situation in March or April, but Guilford states that he will have more information on which to base such a decision by the committee's next meeting.

Guilford states that the committee should develop a policy about how it will address traffic issues stemming from neighborhood complaints, rather than try to begin from scratch with each new situation. This will be pursued further at the next meeting.

Guilford will report to the Select Board that the Public Works Committee is discussing the traffic issues presented at this meeting, with public hearings contemplated for the high priority items.

3. Shays Street sewer

Doug presents draft of letter to Select Board regarding possible Board of Health waiver of requirement to tie in to the new sewer line on Shays Street. The committee agrees to send the letter describing the issue and asking only that the Select Board take any waiver request into consideration.

4. Steve moves to adjourn the meeting at 9:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Crowner